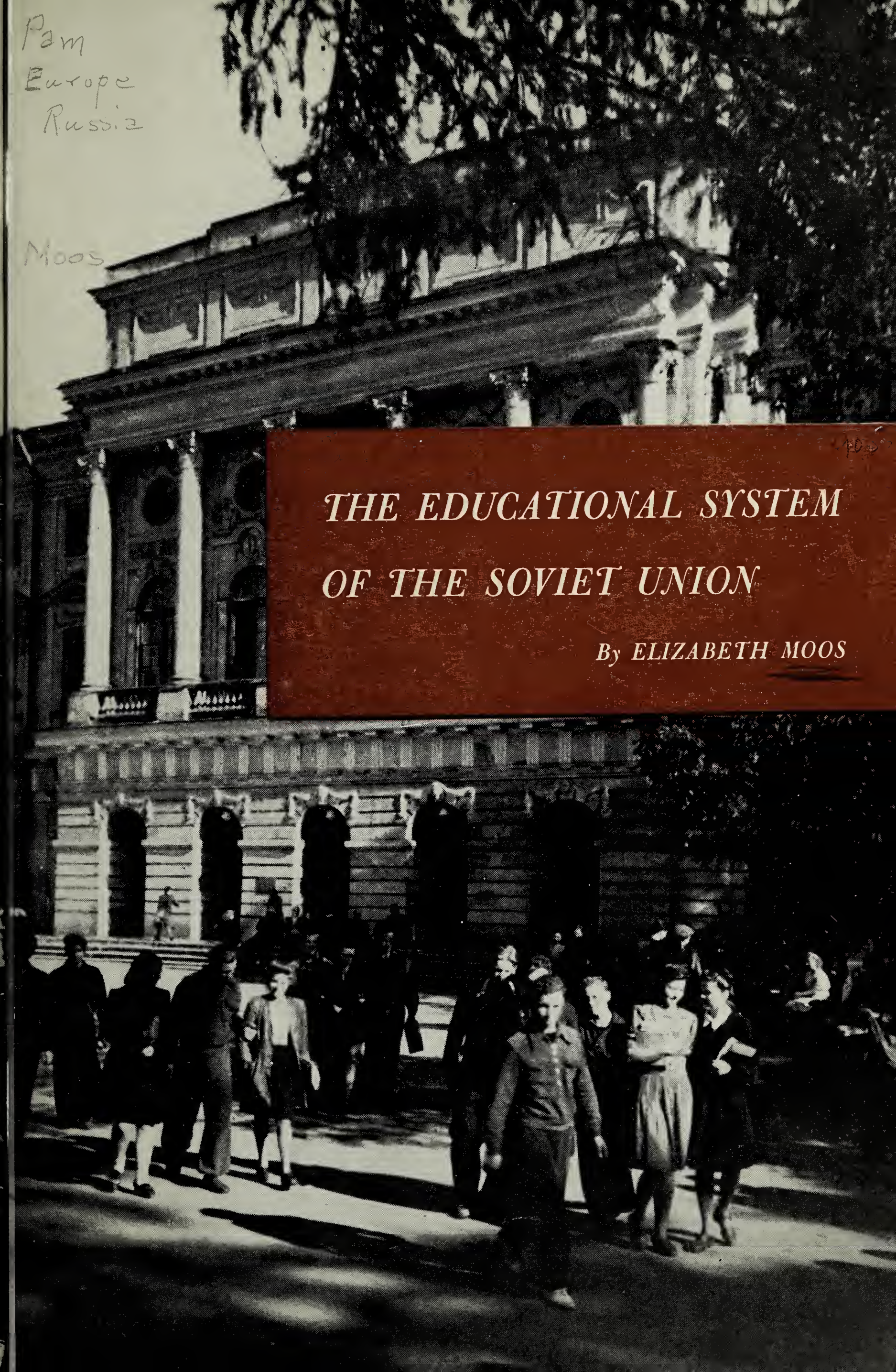


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*THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM  
OF THE SOVIET UNION*

By *ELIZABETH MOOS*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Moos, a graduate of Smith College, has been an educator for many years. Mrs. Moos taught in New York City and Chicago. She was the founder of Hessian Hills School in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, and director of the school until 1940. She is a recent graduate of the Russian Institute of Columbia University, where she received her Master's Degree in Slavic Literature.



FRONT COVER: *Main building of the Herten Institute.*

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*THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE SOVIET UNION*



*A group of new students, from miners' families,  
at the Stalin Mining Institute, Moscow.*

*THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM*  
*OF THE*  
*SOVIET UNION*

*by Elizabeth Moos*

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	7
1. WHERE THE SOVIETS BEGAN	9
2. PRE-SCHOOL	14
Nurseries	14
Kindergarten	16
3. THE GENERAL SCHOOLS	22
Primary (Four-Year) School	22
Incomplete Middle (Seven-Year) School	23
Complete Middle (Ten-Year) School	27
4. PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS	30
Technicums	30
Technical Training (Trade Schools)	31
Schools for Working Youth	32
5. SPECIAL SCHOOLS	34
Suvorov and Nakhimov Schools	34
Educational Program for Veterans	34
For the Arts	35
For Defectives and Handicapped	36
Schools in the Forests	37
"Children's Homes"	37
6. LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES	39
7. HIGHER EDUCATION	45
8. ADULT EDUCATION	49
9. TEACHER TRAINING	54
10. PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES, METHODS	58
<i>Appendix</i>	62





## FOREWORD

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide a factual account of the Soviet educational system as it operates throughout the USSR, to indicate the principles underlying it and the methods used.

Any educational system must be studied within the framework of the country it serves and with some understanding of the purposes and values of the prevailing social system. This is perhaps particularly true for a study of education in the Soviet Union because the leaders of that country have always considered education of prime importance as a means of achieving their goal of a communist society.

Education is of vital public concern and only when the rich knowledge accumulated by mankind has been mastered, will we be able to establish a Communist society, said Lenin. This belief has been affirmed repeatedly by Joseph Stalin: "To build, one must possess knowledge, one must understand science, and in order to possess knowledge one must study; study persistently, patiently," he told the students in 1938.

In the August issue of *Soviet Pedagogy*\* for 1949 in an article on the opening of the new school year, the editor quotes Premier Stalin: "The level of culture—education of the whole population, workers and peasants, must be raised in order to build our society."

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\* *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 8, 1949.



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# 1. WHERE THE SOVIETS BEGAN

In 1918 when the initial decree establishing general compulsory education was issued, the Soviet authorities faced a land in which large areas were almost feudal in their backwardness. In spite of the great achievements of old Russia in literature and music, the mass of the population was far behind the rest of Europe in education. Except in the cities of the western part, there were few schools of any kind. This vast country, covering almost one-sixth of the earth, was inhabited by 50 major nationalities and as many tribes or groups, speaking more than 100 different tongues. In the north and southeast, millions of children had never seen a school, millions of adults were completely illiterate. Only 4.7 per cent of the total population attended any school, and the figure for literacy was about 24 per cent.\* The problem was further complicated by the fact that many national groups did not even have an alphabet, and among some of the non-Russian peoples superstitious fears had to be conquered before any work could be begun. Transportation, never adequate, had been disrupted by the war and the civil war, agriculture was at a low ebb and industry had to be built if the state were to survive. Side by side with work in industry and agriculture, the task of raising the educational level of the whole population was planned and undertaken.

Schools were built, teachers trained, text books written in several languages. "Reading huts" were set up even in the most remote villages, traveling teachers went to the nomad tribes, philologists worked out alphabets for the people who had none. The slogan, "liquidation of illiteracy" was raised as a matter of major importance. It caught the imagination of the youth, and those who could read taught those who could not. "Socialist emulation" was used to spur on the work of learning to read and write in the same way that it was used to increase the output of coal or wheat.

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\* Census report—1897, 24% lit.; 1926, 51% lit.; 1939, 81.2% lit.

By 1939 the Soviet Government announced that one of every four persons was attending some school, that the population was more than 80 per cent literate. In 1949 one out of every three persons was studying and literacy had reached over 90 per cent. The goal now is 100 per cent literacy and the equivalent of at least seven years of school for the entire population. This development was particularly dramatic in the non-Russian areas. In Tadzhikistan, for example, in 1914, 400 persons attended school; in 1938, 235,000. In the area now included in the Republic of Kazakhstan the people, in 1917, were only one or two per cent literate; in 1948 they were 98 per cent literate. In all that vast land there was not one institution for higher education before the revolution. Now there are 24 and the Republic has its own Academy of Sciences.

This background must be taken into account in any evaluation of the work of education in the USSR. Nor should the effects of the recent war be forgotten, the wanton destruction by the invaders of schools, libraries, and other cultural institutions. In the USSR, 84,000 schools, technical schools, universities, libraries and teachers' colleges were completely destroyed; and in the Stalingrad area alone, 567 schools.

Among the 14 million men and women killed or disabled by the war were many teachers and many young men and women preparing to enter this career. In 1941 there were 1,222,805 teachers at work. In 1943, only 774,795. In 1949, the number had reached 1,225,000.

In spite of the tremendous efforts exerted to rebuild and to construct new schools and to train teachers, there is still a shortage of buildings, equipment and personnel needed to meet the ever-expanding demand for learning. Therefore, the facilities do not conform everywhere to the standards set, and teachers with less than the desired training must sometimes be used to meet the immediate needs. The daily press and the educational journals are full of reports of progress, criticisms and suggestions. For example, "Organization of our forest\* schools is still weak. . . . We demand that the health departments assume full responsibility for the medical service in the forest schools. . . ."\*\* "For the fifth grade a great number of new teachers are required . . . in pedagogical personnel for the higher grades there is a noticeable inadequacy."\*\*\*

Education is an integral part of the over-all plans for the eco-

\* Schools for delicate children.

\*\* P. 64, *Narodnoye Obrazovaniye*, (*People's Education*) No. 7, 1949.

\*\*\* P. 32, *Narodnoye Obrazovaniye*, No. 6, 1949.

conomic and cultural life of the country; goals are set for this field as for every other. "Socialist emulation," rewards and public recognition, are used for stimulating accomplishment just as they serve to encourage increased yields of iron or cotton or production of better automobiles. "In the course of the fourth Stalin five-year plan," wrote Professor Medynsky in 1947, "the network of educational institutions in the USSR will far surpass those of pre-war days. There will be double the number of children in kindergartens in 1950, the number of schools for general education will reach 193,000, and there will be 32 million pupils."\* (The present figure is 34 million.) There will be 1,280,000 students in the middle professional schools and about 674,000 in the institutes for higher learning.

Sums allocated for education recently indicate the continued determination of the Soviet Government to raise cultural standards. Since the war, the amount devoted to educational and cultural needs has steadily increased: in 1943, 12 billion rubles; in 1944, 21 billion rubles; in 1949, more than 60 billion rubles was to be spent on schools, libraries, pedagogic institutes, educational research. 26 per cent of the total budget for 1949-50 is earmarked for educational and cultural work. The fourth five-year plan aims to have 95 per cent of the rural child population complete seven-year and 50 per cent ten-year schools.

The general principles on which all the various types of educational institutions are organized are, according to Soviet authorities, an outgrowth of the basic statement in Article 121 of the Constitution—"The right of every citizen of the USSR to education." Prof. Medynsky lists the following basic tenets which, he says, determine all planning in this field:

"1. State direction, finance and control of all education. This assures a unified and coordinated program, correct planning, material security and stability.

"2. Universal, free and compulsory education from 7 to 14 years (through the seven-year school).

"3. Unity between all links of the educational system. In the USSR there is a single school system for all the people, for all the republics of the Union—between the schools there is also complete correspondence at each grade.

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\* *Narodnoye Obrazovaniye USSR*, Prof. E. Medynsky, member Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the R.S.F.S.R., 1947, Moscow.

“4. Complete separation of church from state and schools—as decreed as early as 1918.\*

“5. Complete equality between the people of the USSR, Russian and non-Russian, in education as in all areas of Soviet life. This is achieved by encouraging national cultures, by requiring that teaching be carried on in the native language, and by guaranteeing to all students a knowledge of Russian. . . .”



*Uzbek school children.*

This fundamental principle of equality of opportunity and unity of standards is carried out through the system of administration. Final authority rests with the Supreme Soviet of the Union for long-range objectives and decisions of importance for the Union as a whole. The major responsibility and authority for the elementary and secondary level belongs to the Ministry of Education in each Union Republic and (under the Union Republic Ministry) in each

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\* Seminaries for training priests are now functioning.

Autonomous Republic. The Republic Ministry of Education includes departments for each of the various types of educational and cultural work: adult education, art and ballet schools, music conservatories, labor reserve schools. Each is in charge of the publication of text books and the production and supply of teaching materials. Supervisors appointed by the Ministry serve to coordinate the work in the schools of the area, and report suggestions from classroom teachers on needs and progress to the central office. The supervisors also advise and assist the school principals. The planning and budgeting is the work of the Ministry\* and is done on the basis of suggestions and recommendations from the various local educational authorities who are in closest touch with the actual work.

The general schools are financed from the local budget, the institutes for higher education from the national budget. Additional funds are allocated by local communities, trade unions, and collective farms.

Each region (oblast), each county (rayon) within the district, each city and town, has its Educational Administration. In large cities the work is further subdivided into boroughs. Villages in rural areas are grouped together under a local educational administration. These administrations are chosen by the town or village Soviet from its own elected members, and are not necessarily specialists.

Actual allocation of funds and programming in detail, the initiative in new projects, are the responsibility of the head of the school in cooperation with the staff. Recommendations for texts and syllabi based on classroom experience of the local teacher often go to the top planning body, and are incorporated in the directives sent back to the localities. This gives the classroom teacher a say in the over-all planning of courses and the organization of school programs as well as a chance to criticize text books.

This combination of central control with local initiative is characteristic of Soviet administration in general. The Soviets believe that by this method, in which each body is responsible to the one higher up, a channel is provided for ideas to flow from periphery to center and from center to periphery; that in this way uniform standards are assured without sacrificing democratic participation and initiative at the lower levels.

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\* Minister of Education sits on Gosplan (State planning board) of each Republic.

## 2. *PRE-SCHOOL*

### NURSERIES

The process of education may begin for the Soviet child in infancy. A network of nurseries or creches makes it possible for the mother to send her child where it will receive scientific care if she so chooses. The purpose of the nurseries is the implementation of the right to work, guaranteed to women equally with men. This right will, of course, have little meaning unless the mother can be assured that her child will receive expert care if she chooses to avail herself of it, while she pursues her work in industry, agriculture, the arts or sciences, or administration.

Enterprises\* of all types are required to set up nurseries for their working women. Administrative and financial responsibility rests with the enterprise, under the direction of the Ministry concerned. Any group of people may set up a nursery: collective farms, cooperatives, city apartment buildings, trade unions, housing developments. In each case the expense is borne by the enterprise. If the women in a community want a nursery and there is no organization to undertake the responsibility, the Ministry of Health may contribute toward the support, but no matter by whom organized or by whom supported, the nursery will function under the local health authorities responsible to the "Ministry of Health Protection." Responsibility for program, plant and personnel belongs to this body and standards set by them must be met. Within this minimum standard, however, there is great variation. There may be but one or two groups in a simple building, there may be a very large and elaborate institution. Parents and the initiative of the local community have much to do with the quality of facilities

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\* The term "enterprise" as used by Soviet writers is too inclusive for translation. It includes government undertakings of all kinds—factories, plants, stores, mines, oil wells, administrative offices, railroads and telephones as well as collective farms and cooperatives.



beyond the minimum. They often contribute their time and money to provide "extras" in the way of equipment.

Hours in the nurseries are arranged to suit the mothers' needs. They will be open 24 hours per day for women on night shifts. Women with young children are not kept on the night shift for long periods. Although the nursery staff members care for the children with affection and motherly tenderness, the Soviet authorities try to avoid any prolonged separation, for they do not consider the nursery a substitute for the home. The 24-hour nursery also solves the problem of the baby-sitter, for the Soviet mother may leave her child overnight now and then.

The staff works in shifts, six hours for the nurses and teachers, eight for the domestic work staff. (If the mother is nursing the child, she will be excused from work, with pay, at the proper hours.) Meals, often all meals, are provided at the nurseries. Parents pay a fee sufficient to cover the cost of the food. (Families with four or more children do not pay any fee.)

The staff of a nursery must include a principal (specially trained for this position), a doctor, a nursery-nurse and assistant for each 15 children. There must be, depending upon the numbers, two or three medical nurses and two or more nursery school teachers. A domestic staff takes care of the cooking and cleaning.

Frequent meetings of the entire staff, medical, educational and domestic, are held to make sure that there is consistent and uniform treatment of the children.

The nursery belongs in this outline of Soviet education because Soviet authorities regard it as far more than a convenience for mothers. In the nurseries mothers see a well-ordered set-up, learn about the proper care of the child, and this, it is hoped, will tend to raise the standards of the home. Nurseries are used as centers of parent education. Frequent consultations, home visits, lectures on child care, are part of the program.

Educational work of a sort is done with even the very young child. There are exercises for the four-month-old infant, habit training from about 18 months. Music and simple rhythms begin at nursery age. Here, too, the Soviet child gets his first experience in a collective—high chairs are made to accommodate three or four children around one large table so that the child will not be isolated while he eats or plays. Toys are planned so that more than one child will be needed to use them. Play-pens in the Soviet nurseries are built for a dozen children or more and the toys and equipment in them are planned for group activities. In the older

groups, there is constructive work similar to that in any well-planned nursery school, blocks for building, a garden for digging, pets, materials for painting and crafts.

#### KINDERGARTEN

At three, the young child may "graduate" into the kindergarten. This may only mean moving into another room or to another floor in the same building, or it may mean going to a new place altogether. The transition is made as easy as possible, and the importance of care at this point in the child's development is the subject of many articles for parents and teachers.

Mrs. Beatrice King, British authority on Soviet education, quotes a letter sent to all kindergarten teachers in 1943 on this subject: "It is desirable to arrange for the admission of new children to be gradual—over a period of three to five days. In this way it will be possible for the teacher to give each child individual attention—the new child must meet a warm, affectionate reception and feel that kindergarten is a happy, interesting place."\*

The transition is often eased by having the nursery teacher go with the child into the new situation for a few days. Usually the kindergarten teacher meets her new pupils in their homes before the opening of school.

The kindergarten, according to Article I of the kindergarten statute of the RSFSR\*\* is "A state institution for the public Soviet upbringing of children between the ages of three and seven with the aim of providing them with all-sided development and education. At the same time, the kindergarten facilitates the participation of working women in the industrial, cultural, social and political life of the state."

Like the nurseries, kindergartens are voluntary. They differ, however, in that they operate under the Ministry of Education of each Republic, and are directly controlled by local educational authorities. Like the nurseries, they may be set up by any group and must be provided by all industrial and administrative enterprises for their women workers. A fee paid by parents covers the cost of food. Large families are exempted from payment. Here, too, local initiative plays an important role in the provision of equipment and improvement of facilities.

The typical kindergarten consists of three or four groups of 25

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\* *Russia Goes to School*, 1948, Beatrice King, William Heinemann, London.

\*\* Each of the 16 Republics has a similar statute.

children each. Each group will include children of the same age, the youngest from 3 to 4, the middle from 4 to 5, and the older group from 6 to 7. There will be a room for each group, a trained kindergarten teacher and assistant in charge. Describing the kindergartens, Mrs. King tells us that they are usually gaily decorated and almost always have a nature corner with plants and pets. There are sleeping porches for the daily nap, dining rooms, and often a special music room. Most of them have a garden. Since the improvement and development of health is a very important



*An outing of a kindergarten for the children of workers at a Moscow confectionery factory.*

part of their task, there are baths and facilities for sun-bathing.

“Children may spend 9, 10 or 12 hours at the kindergarten depending upon the work and needs of the parents. 9 or 10 hours is the usual, so that parents who work 8 hours will have ample time to bring the children to and fro and still meet the requirements of their own job. There are special rooms in the kindergartens where children may stay overnight if the parents are on the night shift. The children are given three meals and those who stay overnight receive four.”\*

“Health education is most important and a consistent regime,

\* Op. Cit., p. 11 (Medynsky).

with correct food, exercise, development of hygienic habits, is particularly important at this age. Kindergarten children spend no less than 4 or 5 hours in the open air, unless there is a heavy rain, a strong wind, or the temperature is more than ten degrees below zero.”\*

The daily schedule is different for each age level. For the 4 to 5-year-old group, it is, according to Professor Medynsky, as follows:

“8:00—children who spend the night wake up.

“8:00 - 9:00—day children arrive, are examined, have free play, activities, and gymnastics.

“9:00—breakfast.

“9:30—directed activities.

“10:30—excursions, play out-of-doors.

“1:00—dinner.

“1:30 - 3:00—nap.

“3:00 - 4:00—free play and activities.

“4:00—afternoon snack.

“4:30—walks and play out-of-doors; day children go home.

“7:00—supper.

“8:00—bed for children who are staying overnight.”\*

Play in one form or another, is the basic occupation during these early years. “It is a means for moral and artistic education—it develops the imagination and the intelligence and teaches the child how to live in a collective—but play must not be used in our schools with the dry, tiresome abstractness that characterizes Froebel and Montessori.”\*

The play or “directed activities” includes singing and dancing, group games, painting and modeling and crafts. The free period is the time when the child plays with dolls and other toys, or whatever type of material he chooses.

One of the most important of the “directed activities” is the language work. In all three groups a good deal of attention is given to developing oral facility and enriching the child’s vocabulary. Many of the methods are not unfamiliar. Excursions and walks are planned to give the children new experiences which they then describe to their contemporaries. The teacher tells stories to be re-told, poems to be learned. Children make up original tales and verses. Children’s writers and poets often visit the kindergartens and read their works. The author of a new book for kindergarten

\* Op. Cit., p. 11.

ages may read his manuscript to the groups and the listeners are encouraged to be articulate about their reactions to the work and the suggestions of the young critics are given careful consideration. Much of the time is devoted to nature work, learning to observe and report on the surrounding world, the changing seasons, the plants and animals. Play material which provides preliminary experience in the three R's is introduced in the oldest group. The children learn too to count and measure and to tell time. There are no formal lessons, and reading is not taught as such. In fact, too early reading is discouraged.

Evidently the problem of the parent who wants his child to be precocious is found in the Soviet Union as well as in our own country! Says L. E. Bözoyitch, writing in a recent issue of the *Semya i Shkola* about getting children ready for school: "Many parents are proud when their 5-year-old children show an interest (not proper for this age), in learning to read and write and count like 'grown-ups.' In the meantime this acceleration has interfered with the harmonious development of the child's total personality, and the all-round development of all his potentialities."\*

Development of each child's potentialities is one of the chief goals of the kindergarten teacher. Soviet educators believe that the child, to be a contributing member of the group, must be a well-rounded person. The kindergarten is often called the "children's collective" and great stress is laid on learning to work and play together, on comradeship and cooperation. But "the collective is not a simple, mechanical union of identical children—every pupil has his own interests and needs."\*\*

These needs can best be met by a teacher who has a warm personal relationship with her pupils, who knows them intimately. This is not difficult, because, in Soviet schools, the children stay with the same teacher all the years of their kindergarten life. The size of the groups, normally 25, and the fact that rooms are large and there is an assistant for each teacher makes it possible to work with a few children at a time. Since the children may spend most of their waking hours in the school, sometimes even stay over night, this kind of individual relationship is particularly necessary.

This solicitude for the child as an individual goes hand in hand with education for life in a collective society. The child hears tales of socialist achievements in overcoming the obstacles of nature—

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\* *Semya i Shkola*, (*Family and School*) No. 8, 1949.

\*\* *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

he hears about the comradeship of Soviet Army heroes, he is taught to honor the leaders of his country in all fields of constructive labor.

In these early years habits and skills of socially useful work must be formed. The jobs used to cultivate these habits are very similar to those which are a part of the plan in our pre-schools, setting the table and serving the lunches, watering plants, feeding the pets, and helping to keep materials in order and the room tidy.

The staff of a kindergarten consists of a principal chosen by the Ministry of Education and especially trained for this particular post; a pediatrician who has had courses in child development, a music teacher, cook, and other domestic personnel.

The pediatrician is responsible for the diet and general routine. His (or probably her—more than 50 per cent of the doctors are women) word is final in matters of rest and schedule. Meetings of the domestic, medical and educational staff serve to coordinate the health and educational program and to give both physician and teachers a picture of the child as a whole.

Parent education is an important part of the work of Soviet kindergartens. Parent committees, made up of one or two parents from each age group, actively participate in the work of the school. They help plan educational meetings, arrange for parent help to repair or decorate buildings, plant the school grounds or arrange excursions. Parents often help in the classrooms in the crafts and games.

There are conferences, lectures and discussions at the school. Parents are encouraged to visit. Teachers are expected to spend enough time in home visiting to be fully aware of the family situation and to give concrete help and advice when needed. It is interesting to note that Soviet child-care authorities consider the parent-school relationship a two-way affair. "Progressive Soviet parents often give valuable advice and help to the school authorities,"\* they say. Many kindergartens have a "Parents' Corner" where lists of books for parents and children, samples of proper clothing, pamphlets on diet and health, etc., are available. Examples of the children's work, especially their paintings, are also exhibited.

The kindergarten not only serves as an example of proper Communist education, according to the Soviet writers, but must also

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\* Op. Cit., p. 11.

assume some responsibility for pedagogical propaganda among the people by radio talks, lectures, and study courses.

In war-time 1943, 1,340,000 children were in the kindergartens. This included the children attending the playgrounds or parks (literally "squares"). Playgrounds are an important part of the pre-school set-up. Usually operated on the collective farms or in rural areas only during the busy season, their program is largely out-of-door activity, swimming, walking and games. During the hot months of summer, the city kindergartens and nurseries also move to the country. Some time is spent in the farm areas in actual work to familiarize the children with the work of the *kolkhoz* (collective farm) and to give them some elementary knowledge about nature and agriculture. In many cases the temporary playgrounds have proved so valuable to the women on the farms that permanent kindergartens have been set up as a result of the summer activities. The aim is to have 5,000,000 children in kindergartens by the end of the postwar five-year plan.

### 3. THE GENERAL SCHOOLS

#### PRIMARY (FOUR-YEAR) SCHOOL

The Soviet child of pre-school age may attend a nursery school or a kindergarten or may stay at home. But at the age of 7, education becomes compulsory. The primary school, first step in the Soviet educational ladder, is co-educational and free. The four-year primary school may be an independent unit; it may be the first four years of a seven- or a ten-year school. Program and standards will be in every case the same. The school term runs from September 1 to May 20, six days a week. The session runs from 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 or 1:00 p.m. The classes are 45 minutes in length, with a recess between. The work is carried on somewhat as in our activities program—a short lesson period setting a task, activities in arts, crafts or group work to give concrete expression to the learning. Soviet psychologists recommend that no more than 15 minutes of instruction be given to 7-year-olds at one time.

Excursions and experiments supplement the classroom. Visual aids of all sorts, including movies, are used, and teachers are encouraged to develop new materials and techniques. At the frequent regional teachers' meetings, such new inventions and ideas are exchanged, and often, if considered practical, produced and recommended for general use.

Most of the school time is devoted to reading. The content covers the subjects formerly taught separately, history, geography, and natural science. Arithmetic is a close second to language study. In the third year natural science is given as a separate subject, and in the last year, geography. In many schools, French, German or English is part of the syllabus, and physical training, painting and music are always included.

Children of non-Russian\* peoples study in their native language. Text books have been published in more than 100 of the languages

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\* Within the Russian Republic there are 13 autonomous republics, five autonomous regions and ten national areas—each organized on ethnic lines. In the Republics of Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan there are similar ethnic groups.



of the USSR, and children learn about their own past and read the literature of their people.

The government maintains free boarding schools for children whose parents cannot be at home—for the children of the fur trappers, reindeer breeders, mountain shepherds, workers in Arctic stations or lighthouse keepers.

In the second year of non-Russian primary schools, two hours a week are spent in learning Russian; in the third and fourth years, four hours a week. Ability to read, speak and understand Russian can, say the Soviet educators, be acquired in these primary years.

It should be emphasized that for all primary schools from the Pacific to the Baltic, the syllabus is uniform, and the basic text, whether in Uzbek, Armenian or Ukrainian, covers the same material. The teacher is expected to supplement the syllabus with material suited to the particular area and people with whom she is working, to use initiative and imagination in relating the fundamental requirements to the immediate situation.

The principle of continuity applies in primary grades as in the kindergarten. The same classroom teacher remains with her group throughout the primary course. Soviet authorities believe that in this way the teacher can work most effectively with parents and children, with no time lost at the beginning of the school year in getting acquainted.

Teachers may use their own tests to check on progress during the year, although this is not required. At the end of the fourth year, however, pupils are given an examination in all skills and subjects studied in primary school. The scope and material to be covered are set by the central educational authority. Questions are worked out in detail by the teachers in each primary school, with a view to stimulating thought rather than rote learning. The "check yes or no" type is not used. Some of the examinations are oral, others written. A member of the Regional Education Department sits on the board of examiners with the principal and staff of the school.

#### INCOMPLETE MIDDLE (SEVEN-YEAR) SCHOOL

Whether the child has spent his primary school years in a small school in a rural area with only the four grades, whether the primary grades have been part of a seven-year or junior secondary school in a town, or whether it has been in a city where there may be ten grades housed in one building, the child upon graduating from the four-year school is prepared to enter the fifth year

in a middle school in any part of the country. In practice, this means that a child from a village in the Far North will be ready to enter a school in Kiev—that a graduate of a four-year school in Alma-Ata would be prepared to enter a fifth year in Moscow, if for any reason the family moved. This is emphasized here because it contrasts sharply with our own plan of varying standards under which the child may lose a year or more if, for example, the family moves from Mississippi to New York.

The second step in the educational ladder, the seven-year school, is compulsory and free. The day is longer than in the primary grades, the term from September 1st to July 1st. Instead of classroom teachers, there are specialists for each subject. In large cities and industrial centers there are separate schools for boys and girls. Girls begin special training in home-making and child care, while boys receive the type of physical education Soviet authorities consider necessary as preparation for military training.

The decision to provide some separate schools for pupils from 11 to 17 years of age was arrived at in 1943-44 after widespread discussion. The previous year, separate education was tried in a few Moscow schools. Reports were favorable, and on the basis of this experiment, in the fall of 1943-44 the system was set up in 76 cities, capitals of Republics and Autonomous Republics, and other major centers. This experiment was also considered successful, and in 1944-45, 70 more separate schools were opened. Now there are about 145 separated secondary schools, and so both systems are at present in operation.

Various reasons for the separation are given: that the differences in physical development between boys and girls, more marked during this period than at any other, require differences in type of physical education; that the rate of physiological development is not the same for boys and girls, and that at this period there are special psychological and mental differences which require different approaches. Therefore, academic progress is faster when the sexes work apart and discipline at this self-conscious age is easier.

Soviet authorities point out that, since the syllabus and standards required are the same, since there is no separation in the higher institutions and no discrimination in work, since all extracurricular activities are co-educational, this period of separation does not affect the basic Soviet principle of complete sex equality. (The approach resembles that toward minority groups—differences are recognized and taken into account without any implication that such differences indicate inferiority or superiority.)

During the three years which correspond approximately to our grades 6, 7, and 8, 28 per cent of the working hours are spent on Russian language and literature. Pupils study chemistry, physics, astronomy and natural science, algebra, geometry, modern and medieval history, and the history and geography of the USSR. Foreign languages are given more time than in the primary grades.

It seems to be a heavy schedule, and considerable homework is expected of the student. Certain factors help to make it possible to cover the required work. The school session runs from September 1 to July 1, six days a week, from 8:30 to 2:30. Little time is given to dramatics or the arts and crafts during school hours. These activities, considered an important part of the total educational plan, are carried on outside of school in the circles and clubs that will be described later when considering provisions for leisure time.

Classes are sometimes as large as forty because of the temporary shortage of teachers. Twenty-five is considered the ideal size, and education authorities say that as soon as enough teachers are available, this will be the rule. In addition to the subject teachers and the head of the school, there is a "teaching supervisor" responsible to the educational authorities, whose task it is to carry on special experiments, to give help as needed to students or instructors and particularly to keep a check on the quality of teaching going on and offer suggestions for improvement. Both the "teaching supervisor" and the head participate in the regular staff meetings on the same basis as the other teachers, and belong to the same union.

Every pupil in the seven-year school must pass the final examinations given at the end of the seventh year in all subjects taken during the three years in order to receive a certificate of graduation. These examinations, like those for the four year course, cover the whole field studied and require creative thinking rather than rote learning.

The board for these final examinations must be composed of university graduates and include a representative of the educational administration. The Russian language, history, geography, geometry, sciences and foreign language examinations are oral, and students are permitted to use the blackboard, maps or globes if they wish. Algebra, arithmetic and grammar are written. The finals in 1947 consisted of 11 examinations taken over 27 calendar days. The Institute of Pedagogical Research has for some time been conducting experiments to discover the best way to test the pupils' real knowledge. Realizing the importance of the factors of tension and self-consciousness, the examiners, writes Mrs. King,

try to put the student at ease. For example, only half the class is present at an oral examination. The others are sent off to play or rest. The time element is not stressed. In line with the principle of teaching students in their own language, both oral and written examinations in non-Russian schools are given in the native language. These comprehensive examinations, given at the end of the primary, incomplete-middle (seven-year) school, and at the end of the ten-year course, determine the pupils' progress.

Pupils who fail in one subject may try the examination again in the fall; those failing in more than one must repeat the year's work. This problem of the "repeater" seems to be troubling Soviet educators. The editor of *Semya i Shkola*, writing in the August, 1949 issue, discusses the task of conquering "repeating" as a major job. The teacher, not the child, is blamed. The editor scolds teachers for failing to recognize difficulties in time to give help, points out that they should know their children intimately and see that proper conditions exist at home as well as at school. "The experience of progressive teachers convincingly shows that complete liquidation of repeating can and must be decisively carried out."\*

The examiner's handbook defines the object of examinations as "to test the accuracy of the pupil's knowledge, his development, his independence of judgment, and his ability to relate knowledge to life and theory to practice."

In the early days of the Soviet Union, intelligence tests were widely used, although there was, from the first, disagreement about their validity. Between 1928 and 1936 the question was hotly debated, the "pedologists," the proponents, were defeated, and intelligence testing was rejected. The basis for this is Soviet belief that environmental factors are determining. Since this type of test does not take these factors into account, say Soviet educators, they are necessarily biased in favor of certain groups. In their opinion, in order to have any value, there would have to be thousands of tests, each worked out in relation to the particular children under examination.\*\* In the early days, the use of these tests led to

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\* Other articles in the Teachers' Gazette criticize the curriculum and suggest changes.

\*\* It is interesting to note that Dr. Ernest A. Haggard, Professor of Psychology at Chicago University, has reached the same conclusion. Speaking before teachers in New York City on October 29, 1949, he warned that intelligence tests are invalid for "lower class children" and "biased in favor of the privileged groups. The discriminatory effects of their use have resulted in the loss to society of a great deal of potential ability."

harmful generalities, say the authorities, and gradings made proved later to be erroneous. Experience during the past thirty years has proved to the satisfaction of Soviet educators that their faith in the perfectibility of man has been justified, that given proper surroundings and equal opportunities, there are ordinarily no inherent disabilities which education cannot overcome.

The next step for the boy or girl leaving the seven-year school is an important one, the choices are many and varied. Therefore at this point the school provides vocational guidance of a very practical sort. Senior students go to visit factories, stores, workshops, laboratories, universities, and technicums.\* Former students come to talk with the graduating group and tell about their experience in higher education or in jobs. Parents and teachers help with advice. The science teachers in the seven- and ten-year schools act as vocational guidance counselors. Public opinion, as expressed in press and radio, is strongly behind the drive for continued education.

The purpose of further schooling, says Mrs. King, is well understood. Education is necessary "for the adventurous task of building a new society, to build new towns, to make the desert bloom, to conquer the frozen lands for men's service, to battle the obstacles set by nature; to create great music, art, or ballet. It is a limitless horizon which calls to the young, and without the school they cannot march toward it."\*\*

#### COMPLETE MIDDLE (TEN-YEAR) SCHOOL

The academically-inclined student will continue into the ten-year or senior secondary school. The student may go as a boarding pupil if there is no high school near at hand. Only students passing the final examinations of the seven-year course with high marks are accepted for the senior secondary work, which leads to the University or Institutes of Higher Learning.

A fee is required in senior secondary schools except for excellent students, but the amount is so small that it does not seem to be a determining factor.\*\*\* There are many exceptions, as for other educational fees: children of disabled parents, orphans, children whose parents distinguished themselves in the war either in the regular armed forces or as guerrilla fighters, are exempted.

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\* Technical high schools.

\*\* Op. Cit., p. 16 (King).

\*\*\* 150 r. a year in rural areas. 200 r. a year in cities.

The course requires three years, and they are years of intensive study. The schedule is the same for all students, whatever they may plan to do later.

In the schools for girls, elementary child psychology and home-craft are required, and at present an eleventh year is added in some schools to train girls for kindergarten or primary work in order to meet the great demand in that field.

For the boys there are courses in draftsmanship, and two hours a week is devoted to preparatory military training.

The syllabus is not static. Shorthand has recently been introduced in some schools, and Latin in others.



*Biology class in a middle school, Moscow.*

The main subjects for concentration are those which must be presented for examination upon conclusion of the three years of study. These are: mathematics, history—modern, and the history of the USSR, a foreign language, physics, chemistry, Russian grammar and Russian literature. Subjects studied but not examined at the finals are: astronomy, natural science, world literature, logic, and physical education.

The parent-school relationship described in the section on the

pre-school continues throughout the educational system. Soviet leaders believe that the foundations of character are laid in the home, and try in many ways to cultivate cooperation between home and school. Now that most parents have themselves been educated under the Soviets, and the majority of the teachers have been trained in Soviet schools, there is none of the feeling that the teacher is apart from the community, and cooperation is more and more the rule everywhere.

The parents' organizations played a very valuable role during the war, and are continuing and expanding. In every school there is a "Parents' Association." The fact that the principal is *ex officio* a member indicates the status of the group. Each class has its parent committee, and the classroom teacher—or in the middle schools, some member of the staff—is a member. The committees are elected by the parents, and, in cooperation with the staff, plan and carry out a great variety of activities designed to help teachers and improve the educational work.

Parents organize conferences and lectures; they carry on educational propaganda among parents to insure full attendance, to urge continued education. They help needy children, especially the ill or orphaned. In the school, parents often assist teachers in the arts and crafts or the gardening—according to their own abilities and interests. They arrange trips, plan vacation and leisure-time activities, and help with the school meals. Part of their job is to see that the school has the facilities it needs, and they give both time and money for new equipment, buildings and grounds.

The home visiting by teachers continues into the upper grades as well as parent conferences with principal or teacher, so that problems may be jointly solved and a unified approach assured.

Parents have played a very useful role in eradicating the last remnants of superstition among the backward peoples and in the task of eliminating the effects of racial prejudice sedulously cultivated by the Nazi occupiers among the children under their control.

The excellent magazine, *Semya i Shkola*, previously quoted, publishes many articles by parents and for parents on questions of child care, education, and family life.

Parents have also been very active in the actual work of reconstruction of the thousands of schools destroyed by the invaders.

## 4. PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

### TECHNICUMS

Many graduates of the seven-year school enter the technicums, schools for training middle-grade specialists for the various industries, agriculture, law, administration, medicine, or the arts. The academic program in these schools is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and all students cover the syllabus of the ten-year school, no matter what their field of concentration.

The technicums are administered by the organization and the Ministry most closely connected with the field for which the students are preparing. The technicums prepare teachers, nurses, librarians, dental technicians, engravers, specialists in physical education and hygiene, junior legal assistants. They cover roughly the fields of industry, transport and communication, agriculture, law, medicine, pedagogy, the arts. The arts include motion pictures, the theatre, dancing, music, designing, painting, ceramics, etc.

There is a great variety of these schools and new ones are opened as the needs arise. The vast program of reforestation, part of the fourth five-year plan, needed more experts to carry out the work. So the Ministry concerned, in several Republics, set up new technicums to prepare the specialists.

The courses run from three to five years according to the subject; they are co-educational and require a small fee. Students do considerable work in laboratories, studios or work-shops, and during the last year experience in actual work outside of the school is required—this will be in a hospital for the medical school, a theater for the dramatic student, industry for the engineer.

About 5 per cent of the graduates enter the university for further education. The majority go directly into responsible jobs. In 1946, there were 3,152 technicums with 891,000 students



## TECHNICAL TRAINING (TRADE SCHOOLS)

In 1940 there was a great demand for skilled workers in many fields and the Labor Reserve Schools were established to meet the need. The decree setting up these schools contains a provision for drafting students from town and country. To date this has not been used for there have always been more than enough young people volunteering for this training.

The Labor Reserve Schools take boys from 14-17 and girls from 15-18. Except in some of the larger towns, they are boarding schools. Living, clothing and books are supplied free and the time spent by the pupils in practical work is paid for at union rates. There are two-year courses in railroading, metallurgy, the electrical trades, for transport, communications, the chemical and other industries. There are schools for steel-workers, drillers and underground coal mining which are open only to boys from 15-19.

About 75 per cent of the school hours are given to the major field of concentration, 25 per cent to mathematics, physics, language and political-economic studies. The school day is seven hours, five spent in practical work and two in theoretical studies. This allows plenty of time for recreational and cultural activities and the schools are required to provide facilities for sports and for the arts and crafts.

Graduates spend four years working in their special field wherever the Central Labor Reserves Administration assigns them. After that time, the graduates may change vocation, continue studying or go on in the same job. Many enter the technicums or take further courses in the schools set up by the trade unions.

The Labor Reserve Schools also offer a six months apprentice course to 16-year olds who wish to enter some field in industry. These short courses include language study and cultural activities along with the practical training.

Special Vocational or Junior Trade Schools have been established to meet the needs of boys and girls robbed of their normal educational opportunities by the war. These youngsters of ten or eleven were subjected by the invaders to sufferings far beyond their years. They assumed adult responsibilities, in many cases defending their land with the guerrilla fighters. When the war ended, or when they were liberated, it was difficult or even impossible for many of them to take up school routines again along with children of their own age who had far less maturity. Many of them wanted to go on working. So in these junior trade schools

they are responsible wage earners,\* working short periods in shops specially built to suit their physical size and capacities. At the same time they are given courses in the essentials of history, geography and literature and language, as well as some technical subjects. Every effort is made to induce them to go back to "regular" school for further education. At 16, the student may decide to go further in school or to enter a trade. At least he or she will have completed the minimum schooling.

#### SCHOOLS FOR WORKING YOUTH

Young adolescents who missed their secondary education because of the war offered another problem. To meet their needs, courses for "Working Youth" and for "Rural Youth" have been organized. These young people were, for the most part, already in jobs in industry or agriculture when the war ended. They saw the terrific work of reconstruction that had to be done; they had already entered the adult world and were seldom interested in going back to school. In line with their belief in the importance of learning, Soviet authorities were determined to see that these young workers received at least the equivalent of seven-year school education. So all agencies employing them were required to provide facilities and time for study. Sometimes alternate days are arranged for work and for study, sometimes alternate weeks. More often part of the day is given to schooling and part to work. Experimentation is still going on to find the best way of organizing this on-the-job schooling, always with the aim of persuading the young men and women to complete the seven, or even the ten years of general school work. There has been considerable success—in 1944-5 more than 7,000 young people passed the examination for graduation from the seven-or ten-year courses.

The problem of the "Working Youth" was not confined to industry. Many young people, returning to the rural areas after the war, entered immediately into the work of rebuilding and reorganizing the ruined farms. They too were often unwilling to give up the work on the land they saw was so desperately needed, and go back to their studies. For them, evening schools were opened in 1944. These schools are free and co-educational—like all schools with the single exception of the senior study classes noted above. These are primary schools and middle schools, and, where

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\* They receive pay for all practical work done.

the numbers warrant, complete ten-year evening courses. Pupils study five days a week for four hours. In areas where there are very few students, individual instruction is arranged. In this way young men and women from 14 to 25 years of age may complete their studies without giving up their jobs on the farms.

In 1947 there were, in the RSFSR alone, 4,970 such schools and individual classes in operation. In 1949 over 520,000 farm youth were studying in these courses. Many graduate, take the examinations, and continue on to higher education in the technicums or universities.

## 5. SPECIAL SCHOOLS

### SUVOROV AND NAKHIMOV SCHOOLS

Other, quite different types of schools were opened as a result of the war—the Suvorov schools for preparatory training for officers for the Army, and the Nakhimov schools for officers for the Navy. Originally youngsters who themselves had had experiences in guerrilla bands made up the major part of the enrollment.

These schools are the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense although, as in all educational institutions, the program of general studies is under the Ministry of Education. It is considered an honor to be admitted, and preference is given to the sons of Red Army or Navy men killed during the war, or to sons of guerrilla fighters. In these boarding schools for boys, tuition and living is free. Boys usually enter at 9 years of age. The academic requirements are stiff; the usual subjects of the ten-year school are covered in nine years. In addition to the usual physical education, the boys learn to ride and to fence, and have military training. The last year is largely devoted to military subjects. Not all students go on to a military career by entering the military or naval academies. They may decide to go to a university or technical school. Some may decide at 16 to change careers and enter the general school for their final year. Most of them, however, do graduate and continue in the field for which they have been trained.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Many special provisions have been made for veterans. By a series of decrees they have been exempted from payment of tuition in all educational institutions. As noted above, the children of men killed at the front or disabled are admitted free.

Veterans who were studying in technicums, institutes or uni-

versities before being called up are guaranteed re-entrance into the same or parallel schools without examination. If they are graduates of the seven- or ten-year school with a grade of "excellent" they are admitted without examination to technicums or universities.

Disabled veterans are given special training in the day schools—which have been set up throughout the Soviet Union for this purpose—or when necessary, in the Therapeutic Centers in the hospitals. Veterans are guaranteed jobs when ready for them. The cooperatives are very active in the training program and many cooperatives particularly for disabled veterans have been organized. It should be noted that the schooling, health care, new appendages or equipment when needed are paid for by the state.

#### FOR THE ARTS

The educational system provides for children at both ends of the scale—the specially gifted and the defectives.

Artistic talent is nurtured whenever and wherever it appears. In all the larger cities and many of the smaller ones, there are special schools for children with talent in ballet or music, theater or painting. Parents or teachers who think a child thus gifted may take the little one to be examined at one of these schools. Sometimes a collective farm group or a local community will send a promising youngster to be examined. Children come from all parts of the country to the arts schools and if accepted, they will be given tuition and living by the school. The only criterion for admission is artistic talent. Sometimes children are accepted as young as six years of age.

The schools are always attached to an institution in their field—a conservatory, a theater, an opera house or a studio. There is great variety in these schools, but all comply with certain basic requirements. All must give the student the equivalent of the ten-year course in general education. The students will have to take the same examination that students in any regular secondary institution do. All are required to provide their gifted pupils with opportunities for participation in the social activities and responsibilities common to their age. Soviet authorities are insistent that the children with special ability, the future artists, be not set apart but taught to feel themselves an integral part of their society. Artists play an important role in the USSR and have special responsibilities as citizens.

Artistic standards are high in these schools. Sometimes it may appear that a student does not develop according to early promise, does not have real creative ability. In such a case the student may change vocation altogether and enter another school, or, more often, go into a technicum to prepare for general work in the field, or a pedagogical school and go into teaching.



*A class in solfeggio in the second form, Central Music School.*

#### FOR DEFECTIVES AND HANDICAPPED

The Institutes concerned with Child Development, Pediatrics and Neurology all carry on research in problems of defectology. Attached to the hospitals or Institutes are schools for defective children. There teachers benefit by the guidance of experts and the researchers by first-hand study. These establishments are free and boarding. Workshops are an important part of the school, and an effort is made to find something that every child, no matter how retarded, may do. The Soviets consider satisfying, constructive work a valuable therapeutic agent. They feel that the sense of being a part of one's society is essential for happiness, and try to give even the defectives a feeling that they are contributing members of their "collective."

Similarly, special schools for the deaf, mute and blind youngsters have shops for manual work, and studios for the arts and crafts, music and dancing, so that every child may find some satisfying creative expression. Education for the deaf, mute and blind is compulsory to the age of 16. Most of those so handicapped live in boarding schools; the parents may contribute the cost of food if possible. The academic work consists of the same courses that other children have. It may take them a little longer to complete the work of the ten years, but they will usually do so, for whatever help is needed will be given them. This is part of the general plan for work with the handicapped: that is, to try to give every child, as far as possible, all experiences normal for his age, and make each one feel a part of a social group. Teachers in this field are specially trained for work with the defective or the handicapped. They receive higher salaries than the regular teacher, and are given smaller groups in order to be able to provide much individual attention.

#### SCHOOLS IN THE FORESTS

For the child who is delicate, the pre-tubercular, there are the famous Forest Schools. There were 78 of these in 1947 in various selected areas. There the child spends much time out-of-doors in rest and play and study under medical supervision. An enriched diet and extra rest is part of the regime. The schools of course are boarding. The parents pay a fee to cover the cost of the food—if they are able to. No child is excluded because of inability to pay, and many of the trade unions support schools of this type for children of their members.

Children in the "preventoriums" follow the regular course of study at their own pace, so that whenever they are well enough to go home they may re-enter the local school. In a recent number of the parents' magazine entitled "Thanks Comrade" there is a description of the joyful return to home and school of a youngster who after many months in a Forest School has regained health and is taking up normal life again. The mother pleads for many more such schools so that all delicate children may benefit.

#### "CHILDREN'S HOMES"

The war left thousands of children orphaned and homeless, and great numbers of "Children's Homes" have been opened all over

the Soviet Union to care for them. Since these homes are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education they belong in this survey. These are intended to be homes in the deepest meaning of the word. The people of the USSR consider the care of these victims of the war a social responsibility and trade unions, collective farms, local communities, cooperate to build and support homes and to make them as pleasant for the children as possible. Often a home is established and supported by a group in honor of its war dead. The process of "adoption" described in the next chapter operates here to link the children in the homes with their community and to supply them with plenty of "adopted" relatives even if they have lost all their blood kin. Standards for the staff are high. They must take courses in psychology, hygiene and child care as well as diet and home management. They are also expected to continue on-the-job study. The required subjects include methods for teaching arithmetic, history, language, etc., in order, say the authorities, that they will be able to give their charges proper help with home-work; games, arts and crafts and music, so that they may make the leisure time a happy and fruitful period; nature study and gardening so that they may work with the children in these pursuits. Every home has at least a garden, and many have large farms from which they get much of their food.

The children attend the local schools and continue on into jobs or higher education just as those in ordinary homes would do. Great stress is laid on making the home a place as nearly like a normal family home as possible—and so love of children is considered essential for those who wish to enter upon the career of "upbringers" of the new generation.



## 6. LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

The responsibility of the Soviet educator does not end at the school-house door. The leisure-time activities of children are included in the total educational plan. The function of various types of cultural-educational institutions, writes Prof. Medynsky, "is to meet the diverse interests of the young people, to develop their creative abilities and initiative, and to organize their leisure time rationally"\*

Such activities are under the department of "out-of-school" activities of the Ministry of Education. The cultural activities are carried on both in the school and in other institutions. "The teacher and school directors are responsible for seeing that the energies of the students are channeled into organized interesting activities, cultural expression and pleasant relaxing amusements."\*\*

Every school has its clubs or circles for sports, the arts and sciences, handicrafts and hobbies.

The club activities are coordinated with the class work and serve to enrich and to give concrete expression to the school learning through dramatics and the arts and crafts. Sometimes the classroom teacher carries on the extra-curricular work (for which extra salary is paid), but it is considered preferable to have the clubs guided by specialists when they are available.

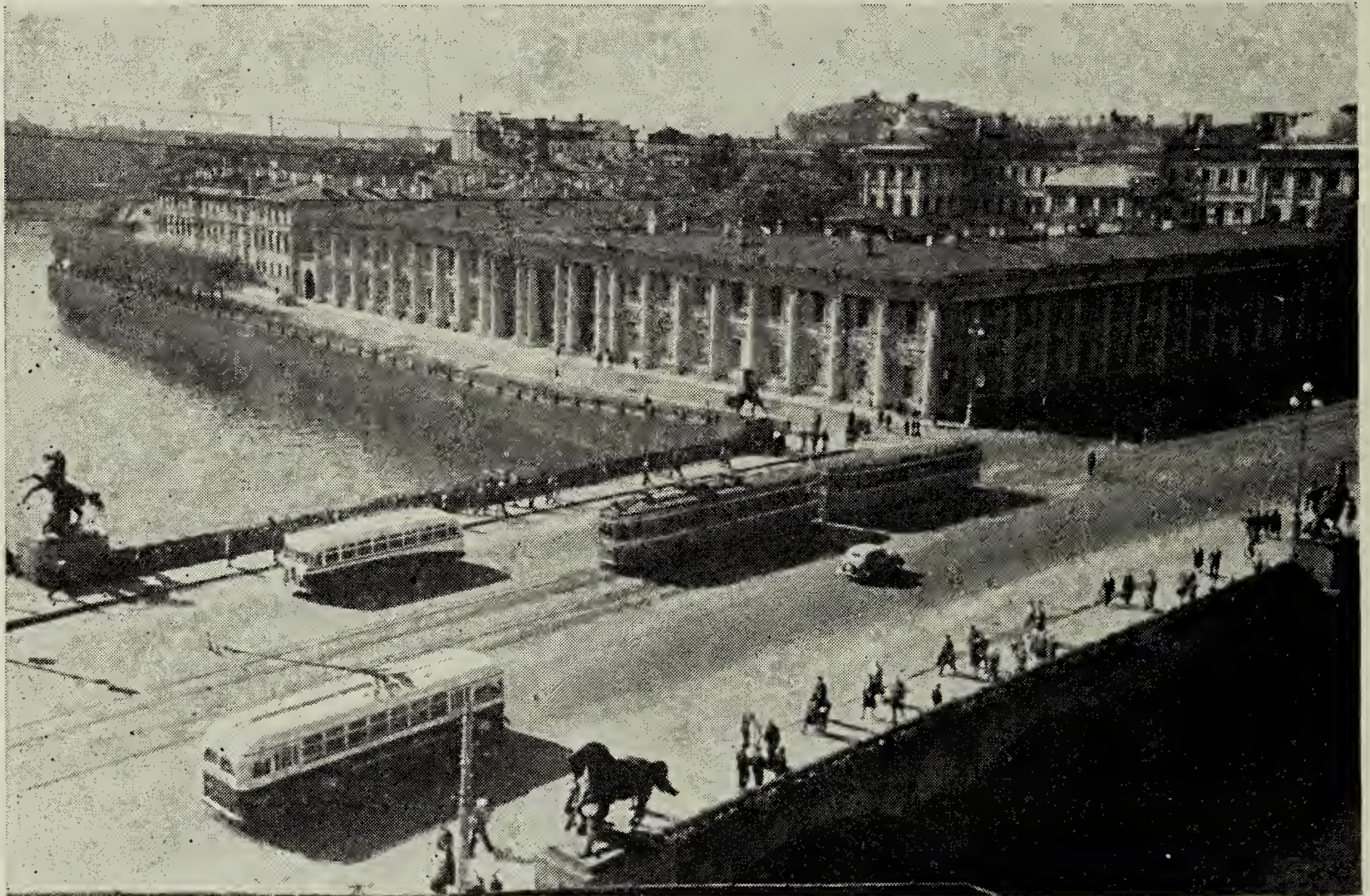
Sports and competitive games are one of the important activities of the clubs. Although physical education is part of the school curriculum, team games and sports are not carried on during school hours but as one of the out-of-school activities. Thus in the Soviet Union, soccer and hockey and other teams are not school teams but club teams. There is tremendous interest in sports for young

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\* Op. Cit., p. 11.

\*\* *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 8, 1949.

people and for adults and games are played between sports clubs of factories, collective farms, community groups. The physical education teachers work with these groups and the range of sports is very extensive. Not only team games but track and field athletics, skiing, skating, swimming, tennis, mountain-climbing, parachute jumping, clubs are found in all parts of the country and there is a good deal of propaganda about the importance of keeping oneself fit and the pleasure to be derived from sports. The public is as interested in the soccer games or the skiing contests as we are in baseball, though the participants are, strictly speaking, amateurs, for there are no paid professional teams in the USSR.



*The Leningrad Palace of Young Pioneers.*

The quality of performance of Soviet athletes is evidenced by their world records. They hold many in track and field and skating events, and have won soccer games played against teams in many countries of Europe.

It is impossible in a brief outline to give an adequate picture of the infinite variety of out-of-school institutions for children. There are the great Palaces for Children, like the one in Leningrad with

its dozens of laboratories for science, for photography, for construction, for electrical experimentation. In this children's palace there are reading rooms and game rooms, a theater, a gymnasium. Throughout the land there are Pioneer Palaces. Less elaborate than those in Moscow or Leningrad, they are well-equipped for the use of young people, providing places where they may sing and dance, paint and act, play chess or build aeroplanes. Mrs. King writes, "A Palace is a place of cultural education, where standards are imbibed. So, much attention is paid to lay-out. Wall decorations, curtains, carpets, furniture, sculpture—all are designed to make children feel at home in civilized surroundings."\*

There are "Technical Clubs" for boys and girls whose hobby is electricity or radio or engineering, where they may carry on experiments and construction. A center in Moscow, with adult scientists, gives advice and help when needed. Young members exchange their ideas and their inventions. Through correspondence, groups even in remote regions keep in touch with the more centrally located technical clubs, and this serves to unite like-minded youngsters of different nationalities.

Young naturalists' stations, like the clubs for mechanically-minded young people, are also centrally organized, with branches in every corner of the land. Where there are no stations, isolated youngsters carry on work in their hobby and report by correspondence to the nearest station. Often the work is linked with nature study in school or with some natural history museums. The "nature stations" carry on practical work of value to the whole country, as in the reforestation plan, in which they actively cooperate.

Another unusual form of "recreation" is the "Children's Railway" and "Children's Fleet." In 1940, there were 12 of these railroads, usually in a Park of Culture and Rest, with two or three miles of track. Complete in every detail, they are built on a scale just right for boys and girls between 12 and 16. The young engineers and firemen, ticket collectors, and trackmen, get educational experience in railroading as well as great enjoyment. The Children's Fleets of small sailing and motor boats are found in many river and seaport towns.

There are playgrounds and sports stadiums for children's physical activities; museums, theaters and libraries especially for them. All these facilities provide for creative self-expression by the child in many media. Their creative work is treated with respect—at the

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\* Op. Cit., p. 16.

All-Union Exhibition in 1949 were seen painting, sculpture, and wood-carving from children in all the Republics.

The professional drama, music, and cinema are considered part of the program for children's cultural education, and the theaters and concerts, puppet theaters and films for children are famous for their artistic quality, and high standards. The best actors, writers, and musicians use their talents for children.

No description of the life of the young people in the Soviet Union would be complete without including the two All-Union organizations which play so important a role both in and out of



*Choreographic class at a Young Pioneers' Club in Yaroslavl.*

school. These are the Young Pioneers and the Komsomol (Communist Youth League). The Young Pioneers, for children from 10 to 15 years old, was established in 1922, and has grown steadily. In 1949, more than 7 million children were members. Professor Medynsky describes the work of the Pioneers as follows: "to raise the level of ideological-political understanding of their clubs and of other students, to develop their interest in science, arts and crafts, to help to improve the knowledge and the discipline among the school children—Pioneers must be examples to all children."\*

\* Op. Cit., p. 11.

Pioneer groups are set up something like our Scouts—although they are co-educational—with groups of 10; these “links” are combined into “brigades” of forty with leaders drawn from the Komsomols. The Pioneers organize all sorts of excursions for their members; they hold conferences frequently. Given the dignity of an official and recognized part of the educational scheme, they have full co-operation from school and government authorities. The “Pioneer Palaces” (which, by the way, are open to all children, whether members or not) have already been described.

During the war and the reconstruction period, the Pioneers were extremely active and useful. Like our scouts, they collected metal, helped families whose men were away at the front, etc. Many Pioneers went with the guerrillas and took a hand in the struggle against the invader.

The Komsomol organization, says Prof. Medynsky, “is the assistant of the Communist Party in the work of educating the younger generation, in raising their level of ideological-political knowledge, developing their initiative and creativeness, improving their knowledge and their discipline, introducing them to ‘community’ life, and teaching them to take part in practical work.”\* The Komsomols are expected to be examples and leaders; many are later accepted into the Communist Party. They assume considerable responsibility for helping the teachers in schools, they work with the Pioneers in and out of school. The educator Nadezhda Krupskaya (wife of Lenin) wrote much about these two organizations and considered them of great importance. She wrote, “School, Pioneer and Komsomol are striving for the same goal—the education of a New Youth, able and ready to build Communism.”\*\*

These great organizations serve to relate the schools to life, and it is one of the fundamental principles of the Soviet educational philosophy that schools must be a part of the life around them.

Another widely-used method to maintain the close link between education and society is the plan of “adoption.” Every school has its patron and in turn the schools “adopt” some group toward which they act as patrons. In industrial regions, the local factory, or a trade union or a workers’ club may adopt the school. In rural areas the patron may be a collective farm or a machine-tractor station. Theaters, scientific societies, units of the army or navy, often assume this responsibility. The patron may help improve the school facilities; members may come to tell the children about the work

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\* Op. Cit., p. 11.

\* *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 2, 1949.

they are doing in factory or farm, library or music conservatory. Often the patron organizes and supports summer camps for the child protégés.

The children may adopt an army unit, a trade union, a machine tractor station, or a hospital. They will write letters, go to the hospital to read aloud or to bring flowers. Children may go to the factory during the noon hour to sing or dance for the workers, they may put on a theatrical performance at the tractor station, etc. All these activities, Soviet authorities believe, create a feeling of unity, help the children realize that they are an integral and contributing part of the socialist society. Another practice which reinforces this realization is the plan for practical work which is carried on in the rural areas. There the children—and teachers—in the upper grades give a definite amount of time to work on the nearby farms, tractor stations or in the agricultural experiment stations.

## 7. HIGHER EDUCATION

General education, as we have seen, is the responsibility of each Union Republic. Each has its autonomous Ministry of Education to whom the local educational authorities are responsible.

Direction for Higher Education is more centralized. All universities and most of the single-faculty institutes (which together make up the system of higher education), are under the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR. This is a Union Republic Ministry. In each Republic there are Ministries of Higher Education under the general guidance of the Union-Republic Ministry. The curricula, appointment of heads of universities or institutes, approval of applications for degree and granting of doctorates are within the purview of the Union-Republic Ministry of Higher Education.

The Minister of Education in each Republic is a member of the Council of Ministers of that Republic and the Minister of Higher Education sits on the All-Union Council of Ministers. Soviet authorities believe that this centralization makes it possible to better coordinate the need for highly trained men and women in certain fields with the supply. New departments can be planned as needed and facilities expanded. The principle of uniform standards is adhered to in all fields of higher education as in the general schools. Professional requirements are the same in every Republic throughout the USSR. In practice, this means that a physician graduating—for example—from the University of Kazan may practice in Moscow, the lawyer who received his certificate from Tomsk may practice in Leningrad or Vladivostok.

The Ministry is in charge of about 304 universities and institutes. Other specialized institutes are the responsibility of a Department of Higher Education attached to the Ministry concerned with the special field: for example, for medicine, the Ministry of Health; for engineering, the Ministry of Transportation, or Electrification, etc. Each Ministry has its Department of Higher Education concerned with the task of training the necessary experts, and each is subordinate to the Union-Republic Ministry of Higher Education.

None of these schools for Higher Education quite correspond to our "Liberal Arts" colleges; there is no B.A. degree.

Students enter the universities with a definite objective. They are expected to reach a decision about their profession before applying for examination for the university. Those who enter from the technicums have of course already specialized—students from the night courses or correspondence schools have been working toward a definite goal. This does not mean that the students cannot change their minds and enter other fields. A change, however, often means the loss of a term or more since specialization begins the first year. It is possible, to transfer from one university to another in the same department without any loss of time, for the curricula, established by the Ministry of Higher Education, are uniform.

The task of the institutions of higher learning, according to Professor Medynsky, is “(1) the preparation of specialists with high qualifications in all branches of the peoples’ economy and culture; (2) the ideological-political education of students and teachers in the basic teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; (3) To give leadership in scientific\* research contributing to the most important work of building socialism; (4) to popularize scientific and technical knowledge and the new achievements of science and technology among the broad masses of the population.”\*\* Universities have the further task of preparing teachers for the middle schools and scientific workers for research.

The 804 Institutions of Higher Learning are of several types. There are the Universities, the Institutes and the Academies.

There are 32 universities now, with one or more in every Republic. In 1917 there were, in many parts of Russia, no facilities whatever for higher education. The universities have many departments, institutes and chairs. Their institutes roughly correspond to the colleges in our own universities; they are special schools, for example, for medicine, for the oil industry, for library work, for aviation, etc. Universities continually add new departments or institutes. The University of Kazan recently added a chair for the study of the Tatar language and literature. Gorky University opened a department for radio-physics; and the University of Moscow, an Institute for Far Eastern Studies.

The institutes or colleges outside of the universities are each set up for one general field, and each has several departments related to that subject. For example, the Leningrad Polytechnical Institute

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\* This term does not mean “scientific workers” in our sense of the word. It includes archaeologists, historians, economists, philologists, etc., as well as physicists, chemists, biologists and astronomers.

\*\* Op. Cit., p. 11.



has departments of metallurgy, mechanics, electro-mechanics, power-machine-building, hydraulic engineering, engineering-physics, and engineering economics. The course in the institute is from four to five-and-a-half years (except for medicine, which is six years).

Twenty types of institutes were listed by Professor Medynsky in 1947. The institutes vary in size; 1,000 students is the usual number, although the Ural Institute has 4,136 students, and the Medical Institute of Kharkov 4,092.

For some branches of study there are academies. Particularly famous is the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy in Moscow. This is an enormous establishment with hundreds of laboratories and seven large experimental farms. It provides training in all branches of agriculture, agronomy, horticulture and animal breeding. During the four-year course the students have much practical experience at the machine-tractor stations or on the farms. During the spring of 1949, 2,000 students from this academy, men and women, worked on the farms and on the reforestation project. The students are paid for their work by the farms and stations, and use their experience when they return as a basis for the thesis and for reports and lectures at the academy and for the public. This practical experience is part of the curriculum for students in every field, and the number of hours to be spent in actual work is specified by the Ministry as part of the course. For the technical courses, from 16 to 38 weeks of practice are required; for medicine, 16 weeks; for pedagogic institutes, 12 weeks. Study, as we see, is linked with life at every stage of education, including the highest levels.

The program of study in higher education is divided into cycles—socio-political, general cultural and special. During the course of study,\* two-thirds of the work is done in the chosen field of concentration, the other third in general-cultural and socio-political subjects. The graduate of the university or institute does not receive a degree, but a certificate entitling him or her to a post as “qualified specialist” or as a teacher for secondary schools. This certificate roughly corresponds to our B.A. or B.S. degree. It may be given in the field of letters, philosophy, economics, mathematics, archaeology, history or one of the sciences.

Undergraduate students usually live in dormitories, though this is not obligatory. Study is taken very seriously. This attitude toward study, however, does not interfere with fun. There are plenty of extra-curricular activities, dancing, theatricals, and all kinds of

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\* For Universities, usually 5 years, for Institutes, usually 4 years.

sports. Tours, skiing trips, and mountaineering are very popular, and students receive cut-rates on excursion trains and in the resorts.

Men and women of university age are active participants in the life of their country. Voting at 18, they may be elected at 23 to the Supreme Soviet, even while still at school. Many of the students join the Komsomol (Young Communist) organization, if they do not already belong. The work of this organization takes considerable time, for the Komsomols help in schools and in community activities. The student also usually joins the union of his profession while still studying.

Within the university, student councils are responsible for discipline. This discipline, writes Mrs. King, "is largely concerned with work, attendance at lectures or seminars, and only secondarily with behavior. As citizens who have reached maturity they are held to be responsible for their non-academic lives, and there is an absence of restrictive regulations."\* (Mrs. King adds that such things as the hazing antics of the English colleges are considered too childish for the university, and the only extra-curricular activity of English colleges not found in the USSR are the drinking parties!)

Every institution has its graduate students and research workers. A number of graduates apply every year to continue their studies. If accepted—the quality of their work is the criterion—they will receive a stipend to cover tuition and living. In order to receive the title of "Candidate," an original thesis must be presented after three years of study, and this thesis must be publicly defended and the examinations taken. Those receiving the "Candidate" certificate (awarded by the Ministry of Higher Education) may apply for study for the highest degree, the Doctorate. For this, the applicant must be recommended by his university and approved by the Ministry. If accepted, a still larger stipend will be granted for three or more years of research. The doctor's dissertation at the end of this period must be defended against several "official" opponents, themselves doctors. The dissertation must be a piece of original research, and the granting of a degree be approved by the Learned Council of the University and the Ministry of Higher Education. There is a good deal of interest in the dissertations and the public does indeed appear at the "public" defense of the candidate's or doctor's thesis. Those men and women who achieve the higher degrees are looked upon with much respect, and much is expected of them as leaders of the country.

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\* Op. Cit., p. 16.

## 8. ADULT EDUCATION

In the early days of the Soviet Union, adult education was largely concerned with the liquidation of illiteracy, because of the enormous number of illiterates in the old Russian Empire. Authorities even at this period, however, were concerned with content as well as skills. Literacy they saw as a tool for further education, as a way of enabling every man and woman to be a participating citizen in the new state, and as a means of providing the necessary basis for introducing the Soviet people to ever-widening horizons.

The work with adults is motivated by Lenin's dictum that only when the level of knowledge and understanding of all the people is raised can communism be established. Krupskaya, whom we have already mentioned, was a leader in the campaign against illiteracy. She wrote, "the task is to learn to use books as tools for acquiring further knowledge—adult students must be taught to use dictionaries, reference books, and catalogues—the teacher should use newspapers and pamphlets for them, not children's stories. . . . Our elementary schools must raise the curtain upon the whole wide area of human knowledge."\*

Now, although illiteracy has been almost completely liquidated, the work of "raising the curtain on knowledge" goes on. The present goal is to bring everyone to the level of the graduate of the seven-year school, and plans are under way to raise this to the ten-year level. This is seen not as an end in itself, but only as a step toward further cultural advance. Jessica Smith writes that "the goal is eventually to make higher education universal."\*\*

There is an enormous variety and number of institutions for adult education. There are schools for general education, for spe-

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\* *Chto Sdelala Sovyetskaya Vlast po likvidatsii negramotnosti sredi vzroslykh*, Ivanova, 1949, Moscow.

\*\* *People Come First*, Jessica Smith, International Publishers, N. Y., 1948.

cial technical training, as well as classes and lectures purely for cultural enjoyment.

Primary schools for adults—often in the local primary school—teach the few remaining illiterate or semi-literate people and give the equivalent of the four-year school. Four nights a week working men and women of all ages come to school. Grandmothers and grandfathers may be studying the same subjects that their grandchildren are. Where the older people do not find it possible to get to the school, particularly in rural districts, the Komsomols and Pioneers go to help them in their homes. The young volunteers are directed by the local teacher, who corrects lessons and provides materials.

Classes in the elementary subjects—and the more advanced—are organized by collective farms for their members, or by the village Soviets. It is a matter of local honor to see that the inhabitants are educated. The “reading huts” found in almost every village play an important part. Cultural centers, they have libraries and lecture rooms, sometimes a health bureau. The head of the center gives help in organizing classes, acting as librarian, arranging for cultural events of one sort or another.

The goal, as mentioned previously, is at least seven years schooling for all. So the adult secondary schools have been set up to provide not only seven- but ten-year courses. In 1944 there were 10,000 such schools which were attended by half a million men and women. Classes are held both during the day and evening, so that working people may come. The students are largely manual workers or peasants with some office employees. Some come to follow through an interest in history or literature or science with no purpose other than the joy of learning. Others come to complete the work required for entrance to a technicum or university. Graduates may take the entrance examinations on the same basis as regular students, and if they pass, will continue their education.

Even a university education can be obtained without giving up one's job. Evening universities, found in most cities, accept students for night study and offer many of the same courses that the regular schools do. Workers are given time off with pay during the examination periods so that they may concentrate on their studies, and when they are ready to take the final examinations, they are granted three months leave with pay to prepare and to review their work. Evening universities are established either by the Ministry of Education or by an industry or administrative body.

Workers who have shown initiative and marked administrative

ability on their jobs may be sent to one of the agricultural or industrial academies which have been set up by the government to train leaders and executives. These men and women study for five years at government expense. Their living and the living for their families, if necessary, is provided free. Their course includes, in addition to their specialty, much work in economics, administration and socio-political subjects. Soviet leaders believe that in this way the country can be assured of top-ranking specialists with a background of practical work-experience for such jobs as head of a trust, or administrator of a large enterprise.

Opportunities for adult workers to raise their qualifications are also widely available at lower levels. Cooperatives and trade-unions devote a large part of their funds to educational work. The trade union in a factory sets up courses for its members, and a teacher from the local technicum may be engaged to carry on the work. This adds to the teacher's income, and also gives the workers an experienced teacher. Classes may be held at the factory, the technicum, the trade union headquarters or the workers' club.

These "workers' clubs" play an important part in adult education—as do the children's clubs in the cultural life of the younger generation. The subway workers of Moscow, the miners of the Donbas, the writers of Leningrad, the textile workers of Tashkent—each group will have its own "palace of culture." In rural areas alone there were, in 1939, 95,400 such clubs and the number in town and country has greatly increased since then. The clubs are of all sorts—some truly elaborate "palaces," others simple club rooms. Chess, sports, singing, dancing, dramatics are almost always included in their programs. There may be literary circles and groups for study and discussion of all sorts of topics. Sometimes there will be classes in painting, sculpture, handicrafts. There may be work-shops for photography and radio or other hobbies.

Eagerness for learning carries over into the weekly holiday. There is the "Sunday University," where courses in a number of subjects—cultural rather than technical—are given, and these Sunday classes are well attended.

Soviet citizens patronize lectures on all sorts of subjects. Every university has its lecture bureau. The Moscow University bureau reported an annual attendance of 60,000; the subjects were largely of a cultural nature. Out-of-doors in the many "Parks of Culture and Rest" there are also lectures and places for movies and concerts as well as facilities for sports.

Lectures are widely used as a means of education. They are

given not only at the universities, schools and cultural clubs but at factories and on farms, in villages and towns. They draw audiences ranging from a few hundred to a thousand serious listeners who often carry on supplementary reading suggested by the speakers. Men and women who have had a specialized education and wish to round out their knowledge, old people who have missed a chance at learning in youth, people who want to learn about some special subject or to keep up with latest developments in cultural fields or in current events make up the audiences. Individuals who attend regularly can acquire the equivalent of a college education. A reading of subjects indicates that every aspect of human learning is included—a random sampling shows such topics, for example, as “The Art of the Renaissance,” “The Technique of Immunization,” “The Literature of the Eastern Peoples,” “Dante,” “Homer,” “The Communist Manifesto.” Many lectures deal with foreign affairs, with a wide range of scientific subjects and so on.

The demand has grown since the war and as part of the increased emphasis on cultural abundance along with material abundance a new organization was set up in 1947 to coordinate and guide the work in this field. This is the “Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge,” whose chairman is Sergei Vavilov, head of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The Society is nation-wide, enlisting the aid of specialists and professors, writers and teachers; it carries learning to people in villages and on farms as well as to the city-dwellers.

A unique Soviet institution is the “Parents University.” Initiated by a group of mothers and fathers in a Moscow factory who were discussing child-parent problems, they are now a widespread and organized form of parent education, in which the services of experts in all fields of child guidance and psychology and pedagogy are used. The principal of the local secondary school cooperates; classes may be in the school building. The courses have expanded and discussions and lectures on subjects not directly related to the child are also given. Educated parents, say the Soviet authorities, make the task of school easier, and every encouragement is given to this movement started by the parents to improve their own “qualifications.”

The thousands of libraries and museums play an active part in adult education by organizing exhibits and lectures, and by going to the people in remote regions with traveling exhibits and visiting libraries.

The correspondence schools are an integral part of the whole

plan and are under the direction of the education authority. The equivalent of every step in the educational ladder which has been described can be found in the correspondence schools. A department for education by correspondence is part of each Republic's Ministry of Education. There is a special recently-established institute, carrying on research in this field. Almost every institute and university has its own department of correspondence schooling. There are "Correspondence School Centers" for consultation in every area where as many as forty students are taking the courses. At this center the examinations are held, and at the center there is a library and often laboratories. Students come at stated periods for a check-up and for help. This Center may be in the local school, or may have its own building. It will be in close touch with both the students and the Correspondence department of the institute or university of which it is a branch. In areas where there are less than forty students enrolled, the principal of the school often takes the responsibility of directing and checking the correspondence work. The secondary correspondence schools have become particularly important now that the aim is to give a seven- or even ten-year education to everyone. The staff for these schools must be approved by the educational authorities, and special inspectors keep the standards as uniformly high as possible. Graduates may take the examinations on the same basis as other students and a number do enter the technicums, institutes, and universities. The Soviet leaders are emphasizing this type of study and urging extension and improvement, for they believe that this is a practical method of making sure that everyone, no matter what his geographical location, has a chance for education at all levels.

The expansion of the correspondence school, lecture services, the great growth of cultural activities in rural areas are all part of the drive to bring education and culture to the dwellers in farms and villages as well as to the city folk. It is also part of the work of closing the gap between the manual and the intellectual worker. These two goals must, Soviet leaders believe, be achieved as prerequisites to the establishment of a Communist society. Adult education is one of the methods by which these aims are to be attained.

## 9. *TEACHER TRAINING*

The program of education for all the people depends, of course, upon the work of the men and women who are doing the teaching. As has been pointed out previously, this has always been—and still is—a serious problem. The ever-expanding school system needs an enormous number of trained people. There were few schools\* in pre-revolutionary Russia for training teachers for the general schools, and their courses were not suited to the modern curriculum and methods. New institutions had to be established to train teachers, not only for the general schools, but for the many types of special schools and for positions in administration. In 1942, an over-all program was established, raising the pedagogic requirements all along the line, and this plan is, according to Professor Medynsky, now being further revised and improved. The Pedagogic Institute, established in 1945, is now engaged in working on a program for an eleven-year school, and this will require further expansion of teacher preparation.

The research institutes and the work in the universities are under the Ministry of Higher Education. All other teacher-training is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education in each Union Republic.

For work in the pre-schools, a four-year course is required. The curriculum includes history of education, psychology, hygiene, methods of speech development, children's literature, arts and crafts, nature study, games and music. Music is considered essential and every student must learn to play some instrument during the four years. Usually this will be the piano, though non-Russian students may choose a native instrument. Music lessons are supplemented by chorus work, dancing, visits to the opera and to concerts.

Practice teaching is done during the last two years, and much

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\* In 1914 there were only 6 pedagogic institutes preparing teachers for the middle schools.



stress is laid on home-school relationships in psychology classes and in practice work.

Teachers for primary schools also take a four-year course in the "teaching schools." Graduates of the seven-year schools are accepted. The training school is always attached to a primary school and observation and practice are given an important place in the scheme. In addition to the courses one would expect to find (psychology, hygiene, methods of teaching the elementary subjects, history of education) every aspirant to a primary school job must study physics, physical education and the "Constitution of the USSR." Since shops and gardens are part of elementary school equipment, prospective teachers learn arts and crafts in the workshops and spend some time in gardening. This may be more intensive in rural areas, for in these primary schools some work on the land is carried on. Since teaching in primary grades is always done in the native language, the teacher may also learn the language and literature of the locality in which he or she plans to work. Now that education has reached even the most remote sections of the country, however, teachers will usually be natives of the area. There are special institutes for equipping personnel for work with the Northern peoples and with the peoples of the Far East. This is but a part of the work of these institutes; they carry on research into the culture, language and history of the non-Russian groups.

"Requirements for primary school teachers will soon be raised. Every teacher in a primary school who has not completed secondary pedagogic education must take courses which will, within a definite time, give the equivalent work. During the next few years we hope that all our primary teachers will receive a higher education."\*

For the next higher grades, those corresponding to our 6th, 7th, and 8th, training is given in the Pedagogic Institutes. Graduates of the ten-year schools are admitted after examination and, as part of the general aim to up-grade workers, teachers in the primary grades who have had three years teaching experience are admitted without examination.

Since in the middle schools specialists are used for each subject, students choose a field of concentration and prepare a major and a related minor. The fields are divided into history-literature, physics-mathematics, general science-geography. In addition to the special subject, physical training, pedagogy, psychology and Marxism-

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\* *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 8, 1949.

Leninism are required. State examinations are given at the end of the two-year course before placement.

Qualifications for teachers in the upper grades—roughly our 9th, 10th, and 11th—are higher. Only graduates of the ten-year schools who have excellent marks are admitted to the Pedagogical Institutes for the four-year course leading to a position in the upper middle schools. The academic subjects are about on the level of our college courses, although there is much more concentration. The student chooses one of the three fields listed above. In addition, two groups of subjects are required: the socio-political—that is, political economy and Marxism-Leninism, and the professional subjects, that is, psychology, education, and teaching methods. During the last two years, students carry on extra-curricular work with young people of middle school age. A full month of practice teaching is also required during the last year of training.

Teachers of the graphic arts, languages, music, and teachers for defective children or for the deaf, dumb and blind, are given special training in institutes set up for the purpose. Principals and school inspectors are prepared for their positions in the Pedagogical Institutes of the highest grade. The secondary schools also use university graduates with special pedagogical training. The present plan to extend ten-year schooling is making heavy demands, however, upon even the greatly-expanded pedagogical facilities of the country.

No matter what their experience or background, teachers are expected to improve their qualifications continually by study. In the cities there are teachers' centers where seminars and classes are held. Everywhere, teachers' clubs organize lectures and conferences. Vacation sessions, evening classes and correspondence courses bring education to teachers wherever they may be working.

All teachers belong to one of the three trade unions, either the pre-school, the primary-secondary, or the union of workers in higher education. The unions are literally for the workers in education, for the cooks and the doctors, the principal, the janitor and the teachers, all workers in a school, belong to the same union.

The main concern of the teachers' union is "good and welfare," improving the standard of education of teachers and schools and enriching the lives of its members. Classes, conferences and lectures are organized by the unions. The largest of them, the primary-secondary union, issues a daily paper which contributes much to improving the quality of work through its criticisms and practical articles from teachers in many parts of the country. The unions

support camps and health resorts, teachers' houses similar to the Palaces of Culture, with facilities for sports and music, with dramatic and literary circles. Often the union sets up a nursery or kindergarten for its members' children.

Teachers' salaries are based on training and experience, and depend upon the number of hours taught and the degree of responsibility taken.\* It is difficult to evaluate the salaries in our terms, for they are only part of the financial picture. The Soviet teacher receives all medical care free, including of course care during and after pregnancy; rent is usually about four per cent of the income of the highest paid worker in the family and vacations are paid. There are free or very low-cost camps for the union members and their children, and cultural activities are inexpensive. Since all teachers look forward to an adequate pension when they no longer work, the salary need only cover the cost of daily living.

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\* See Appendix for basic salary scale.

## 10. PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES, METHODS

In the foregoing chapters, the structure of the Soviet educational system, its program and curriculum, have been described. One cannot, however, understand the actual functioning of this network of institutions without knowing something of the philosophy which motivates them, what they are set up to accomplish, and what methods are being used. In a pamphlet this can only be superficially indicated, in the hope that the reader will wish to study this aspect further.

Marxism, dialectical materialism, is an all-embracing philosophy which determines Soviet thought in all fields—economic, political, artistic, scientific. Because the philosophy of education is the same as that on which the economic and political systems are based, the child meets but one standard of values. He finds the same standards, the same goals, in home and in school and in the world around him. Teachers study Marxism-Leninism and apply it in the classroom. Texts are written with this approach—an approach which Sidney and Beatrice Webb in their book *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization* have characterized as a new view of man's relations to the universe and a new code of man's duty to man.

Some of the ways in which this philosophy affects educational procedures have been previously indicated, but will be briefly reviewed here.

The Soviets see man as ever moving forward, progressing, so the educational pattern must be sensitive to new situations, able to change to meet new demands; it cannot be static. The dynamic quality of this philosophy helps create the developments and changes which sometimes confuse the western observer.

The universal character of Soviet education is based on the belief that there are no inferiorities or superiorities due to race, sex, or nationality. The effect of the philosophical belief that man can control his environment, that he can "wrest favors from nature,"

affects teaching in the fields of science, economics and geography. Every school child knows of the vast projects accomplished and now under way to change the face of the Soviet land for the improvement of life for all the people. The story of socialist construction is used to point out the necessity for collective action. The dialectical approach affects the presentation of all subjects, particularly history. This is studied as a development of social systems, and a study of man's relation to changing methods of production. History, science and literature are closely integrated with contemporary development, and their value for future growth of the country is stressed.

The purpose of the educational system is the development of Soviet citizens who can build a Communist society. The qualities of character necessary are clearly defined for teachers in the book\* currently used in the teacher training schools. They are as follows:

*Patriotism, love for the motherland*

“. . . for the awakening and development of this feeling a certain soil is needed in the form of the simpler feeling of love for one's parents. There is a close connection between patriotic feeling and conduct and the . . . love for those near to us . . . development of patriotism includes the cultivation of love for all those who live in the land.” The author reminds the teacher that children need concrete symbols and images. Lenin, Stalin and other heroes should be used as symbols of the motherland. Historic materials should be presented in a way that will awaken an interest in the creative work and heroic struggles of the great leaders of the past.

*A sense of honor and personal dignity*

“The man who has a feeling of honor and a sense of his personal worth will insist upon justice for himself and for others. He will not endure insult nor will he insult others. Such a man will not accept flattery nor will he flatter others.”\* Teachers are urged to develop the ability for self-criticism and encourage the willingness to accept it.

*A socialist attitude toward work and an acceptance of social responsibility*

“Practical experience is the way to acquire this attitude, children should learn to sacrifice their own personal desires voluntarily in order to accomplish socially useful work.” The pleasure that comes

\* *Pedagogika*, Yesipov, B. P. and Goncharov, H. K., Moscow, 1946.

from collective constructive activity is the theme of many stories, it is perhaps the major incentive operating in the Soviet Union. Observers have commented on this attitude toward labor, much has been written about the joy of work and the passion to build for the community. A Soviet correspondent, for example, wrote about the feeling of a man striding up and down a construction yard or on an uncleared forest path proudly conscious of the importance of his own work. The writer says that his feeling of pride and consciousness of personal value permeates Soviet workers in all fields.

The Soviet citizen is expected to be brave, honest, alert, and persistent. The achievement of the goals set in character-building, say the Soviet educators, will be the result of correct methods of discipline, and in the Soviet Union discipline includes not only behavior in class and satisfactory accomplishment of school work, but personal relationships in the home and in society. School procedures and practice are motivated by "a recognition of the supreme rights and dignity of the human personality," summarized in the term much-used in educational writing, "Soviet humanism."

"The task of education in the spirit of socialist humanism is to give the child a realization of the high value of the human personality, to imbue him with respect for the rights and dignity of man."\*

One expression of Soviet humanism is found in the type of punishment prescribed. Corporal punishment is forbidden under any circumstances because it "degrades and humiliates." No punishment which might undermine the child's self-respect and shame him is permitted. This is not left to the individual teacher, permissible types of punishment are prescribed. Whenever possible the teacher is expected to re-direct the pupil's activities from destructive to constructive work by introducing new interests and opening up new perspectives. Measures of punishment, says *Pedagogy*, should never be regarded as the principal means for cultivating discipline.

Mere outward conformity is not considered good discipline. The child must be self-disciplined. Most important, when away from a supervising eye, the pupil must be able to work in a disciplined way. *Pedagogy* points out that children must know the reason for every rule they are asked to observe. Discipline must be "comradely, founded on mutual respect."

In 1943 a code of rules was established for the school child as a member of a collective. These rules cover conduct both in and

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\* *Pedagogika*, op. cit., p. 59.

out of school. They sound very conventional to us, with their stress on properly greeting the teacher, orderly conduct in class, etc. They must be understood, however, as a reaction to the inevitable lack of restraints during the war situation, and as a serious effort to give the younger generation standards for "cultured behavior." They include such rules as that the child "be attentive and thoughtful toward old people, small children, the weak and the sick, move out of their way, give up a seat, and help them in every way possible; listen to parents, help them, and help with younger brothers and sisters."

The degree of success which the Soviets have achieved in their effort to cultivate initiative, self-discipline, a feeling of social responsibility in their people, was dramatically shown during the war. It will be remembered that children and adults, even left with no official direction or authority, organized themselves for activity against the invader and as soon as conditions permitted, for reconstruction.

An examination of the Soviet education system leads to the conclusion that extraordinary advances have been made in this field since the Soviets came to power, that much educational research, which might be of interest to educators the world over, is being carried on. It seems evident that standards are rising, facilities expanding, and the resources of the USSR are going in large measure to the peaceful channels of educational and cultural development.

If the present rate of progress continues it seems probable that the expressed aims of the Soviets; to bring workers with hand and brain, men and women of town or country to the same high cultural level, may be achieved in the not so far distant future.

## APPENDIX

### ARTICLE 121, CONSTITUTION OF THE USSR

*Citizens of the USSR have the right to education.*

This right is insured by universal and compulsory elementary education; by free education up to and including the seventh grade; by a system of state stipends for students of higher educational establishments who excel in their studies; by instruction in schools being conducted in the native language; and by the organization in the factories, state farms, machine and tractor stations and collective farms of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the working people.

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## BASIC MONTHLY SALARIES

*(in rubles)*

		Under 5 years experience	5-10 years experience	Over 10 years experience
Primary grades 1-4	(I)	490	540	590
	(II)	440	490	540
Secondary grades 5-7	(I)	590	640	690
	(II)	565	615	665
Secondary grades 7-10	(I)	615	665	740
	(II)	590	640	690
Arts, Music, Secondary	(I)	540	590	640
	(II)	510	540	590
Principal, Primary School		590	640	690
		Less than 7 classes	More than 7 classes	More than 14 classes
Principal, 7-Year School	(I)	640	715	780
	(II)	590	665	740
		Less than 10 classes	More than 10 classes	More than 22 classes
Principal, 10-Year School	(I)	740	880	1080
	(II)	690	780	940

Basic monthly salaries, 1946, for teachers in urban schools. (Rural school teachers received from \$25 to \$50 a month less.)

This salary is for a work day of four hours in primary and three hours in secondary schools. Work done over this number of hours is paid at the regular rate.

I and II classification refer to educational qualifications.

Teachers with 25 years experience receive 10% above the rate for 10 years experience.

Teachers holding the title "Teacher of Merit" and those with higher degrees receive 100 rubles per month above the base rate.

Language teachers are paid 60 rubles extra a month for correcting papers. All teachers in Secondary schools are paid overtime for correcting papers out of the three-hour school day.

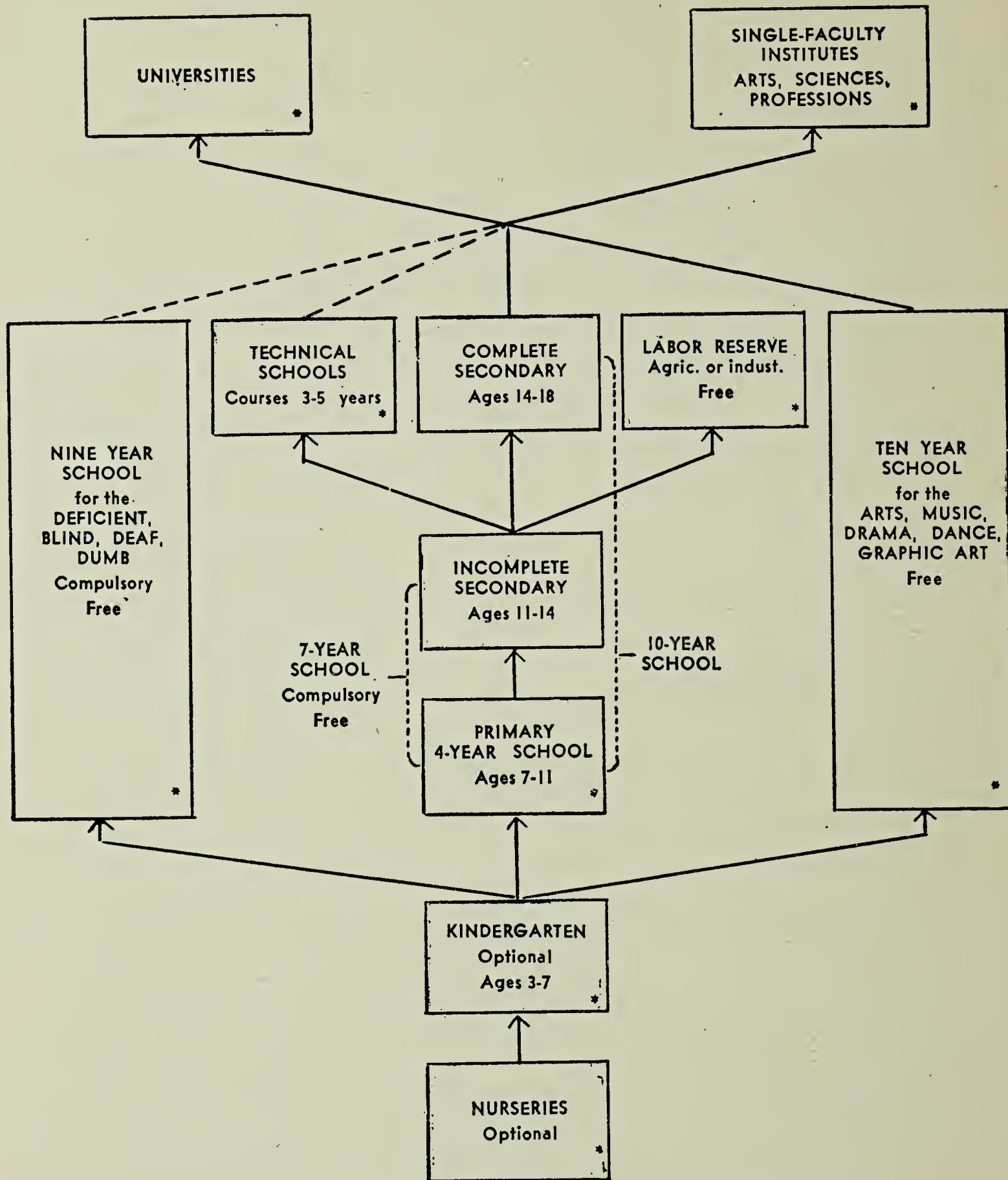
Home-room teachers in secondary schools are paid 75 rubles extra in urban, 50 rubles in rural schools.

Teachers in schools for defectives are paid 25% above the salary scale.

Teachers in remote areas such as Yakutia or the Komi ASSR receive from 20% to 50% above the salary scale.

Because of the need for teachers and the number of adult educational institutions, correspondence courses, trade union classes, etc., teachers may increase their basic salary as much as 100% by teaching more than the three-to-four hour work day.

# THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE SOVIET UNION



\*Co-educational

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION of the National Council has available bibliographies, study outlines, maps, charts, etc. which are prepared for classroom use and study of the U.S.S.R. Lists of materials suggested for classroom use may be obtained by writing to Educational Services, National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. All of the items listed may be purchased from the Council.

Loan Packets prepared for use in elementary and secondary schools may also be borrowed from this office. These packets contain books, both of fiction and fact, pamphlets, periodicals, maps and charts, music, photographs, study outlines and well-illustrated Russian children's books. Packets are loaned for two-week periods. *Rental fee per packet for two weeks—\$1.00 plus postage.*

## EXHIBITS

THE EXHIBIT DEPARTMENT has a large collection of loan exhibitions which are available to schools, colleges, libraries, museums, and organizations for periods ranging from one week to two months. Included in the collection are photographic exhibits on all phases of Soviet life such as industry and the trade unions, agriculture, women and children, education, religion, and cultural activities and interests. There are also general photographic exhibits on developments in the U.S.S.R. year by year. Large and small-scale exhibits on art and the graphic arts include original watercolors by Soviet children, book illustrations by the foremost Soviet artists, reproductions of Russian art, and cartoons and posters.

Sets of slides, many in color, are also available, and loan sets of illustrated books which are read and enjoyed by Russian children. Each set contains twelve beloved books, beautifully illustrated, with a summary of the story for each book, or a tale or poem translated into English. Supplementary packets of photographs on the land, the people, and the cultural interests of the U.S.S.R. may also be borrowed for classroom or reference use.

*Send to Exhibit Department for complete list of pictorial exhibits.*

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